

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 07307 040016Z

ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARIAL TASK FORCE ON U.S. FOOTWEAR:
CONTINUING IDENTIFICATION OF TRADE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
LEATHER SHOES AND BOOTS

REF: A. STATE 89279

B. MEXICO CITY 3217

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL A, EMBASSY CHECKED OUT VARIOUS
POSSIBILITIES FOR SELLING US-MADE SHOES AND BOOTS TO
MEXICAN MILITARY AND SIMILAR FORCES (POLICE, FIRE, ETC.)
WE ALSO CHECKED OUT POSSIBILITIES FOR SALES OF OTHER
SPECIAL FOOTWEAR. RESULTS OF THESE
INVESTIGATIONS CONFIRMS INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REFTEL
B, I.E., THAT MEXICAN SHOE MARKET, WITH JUST THREE
POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS THAT OUR INVESTIGATION TURNED UP,
REMAINS VIRTUALLY CLOSED TO IMPORTED FOOTWEAR.

A. ONE EXCEPTION IS THAT GOM'S INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE
BELLAS ARTES (FINE ARTS INSTITUTE) IS ALLOWED TO IMPORT
PROFESSIONAL TYPE BALLET SLIPPERS.

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 07307 040016Z

B. SECOND EXCEPTION ALLOWS EXTREMELY LIMITED IMPORTS OF
FOOTWEAR INTO MEXICAN BORDER CITIES IN CERTAIN CASES.
HERE, HOWEVER, MEXICAN RESIDENTS OF NORTHERN BORDER
CITIES ARE IN HABIT OF SHOPPING FOR VARIOUS CONSUMER
GOODS, INCLUDING FOOTWEAR, IN ADJOINING US BORDER CITIES,
AND GOM'S ALLOWING OF LIMITED IMPORTS OF FOOTWEAR MAY

BE AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE MEXICAN MERCHANTS WITH SOME OF THE BUSINESS THAT OTHERWISE GOES TO US BORDER CITIES.

C. WE ARE ALSO INFORMED BY LOCAL SHOE MERCHANTS THAT VERY SMALL QUANTITIES OF HIGH QUALITY SHOES MAY BE IMPORTED (AND THAT SWITZERLAND SUPPLIES MOST OF THESE), BUT THAT GOM IMPORT RESTRICTIONS IN THIS AREA ARE GROWING TIGHTER EVERY DAY.

2. AT ABOUT SAME TIME AS REFTTEL A RECEIVED, EMBASSY RECEIVED COMMERCIAL INQUIRY FROM GENESCO, MAJOR US SUPPLIER OF MILITARY TYPE FOOTWEAR AND APPAREL (E.G., FATIGUES), EXPRESSING INTEREST IN SUPPLYING THEIR PRODUCTS TO MEXICAN MILITARY FORCES. EMBASSY EXPLORED MARKETING POSSIBILITIES AVAILABLE IN THIS AREA IN COOPERATION WITH EMBASSY'S MILITARY ATTACHE, AND HAD TO REPLY NEGATIVELY TO GENESCO. MEXICAN ARMY MAINTAINS ITS OWN FACTORIES FOR PRODUCTION OF MEXICAN MILITARY'S FOOTWEAR AND APPAREL NEEDS. THUS, EVEN IN UNLIKELY EVENT GOM WERE TO FREE OR LIBERALIZE IMPORTS OF FOOTWEAR, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY MEXICAN MILITARY WOULD SHIFT ITS SOURCING FROM ITS OWN PLANTS.

3. DESPITE PRESENT UNPROMISING OUTLOOK, EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK OUT ANY EXPORT POSSIBILITIES FOR US FOOTWEAR, AND WILL REPORT ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 MEXICO 07307 040016Z

AREA. LUCEY

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